

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 00608 211811Z

15

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

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SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL JANUARY 20: SPAIN

REFS: (A) EC BRUSSELS 544, (B) EC BRUSSELS 521

1. SUMMARY: THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS, AT THEIR COUNCIL MEETING IN BRUSSELS ON JANUARY 20, DISCUSSED BUT, AS REQUESTED BY THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR, DID NOT APPROVE THE RESUMPTION OF TALKS BETWEEN THE EC COMMISSION AND THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. THE COUNCIL DID, HOWEVER, NOTE "THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION NO LONGER PRECLUDED THE RESUMPTION OF CONTACTS WITH SPAIN REGARDING THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WERE INTERRUPTED IN OCTOBER 1975". THE MATTER IS TO BE DISCUSSED AGAIN AT THE NEXT FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 9 AND 10. IN AN OFF-THE-RECORD BRIEFING FOR THE BRITISH PRESS, UK FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN SAID THAT WHILE NEGOTIATIONS FOR SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC WERE GENERALLY "NOT ON", AND ANY CHANGE IN THE COUNCIL'S ATTITUDE WOULD DEPEND ON THE CONTENT OF PRIME MINISTER NAVARRO'S SPEECH TO THE CORTES ON JANUARY 28. END SUMMARY:

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PAGE 02 EC BRU 00608 211811Z

2. RESTRICTED PORTION: IN LINE WITH THE REQUEST MADE BY THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO THE EC, THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS AT THE COUNCIL MEETING ON JANUARY 20 STOPPED SHORT OF AGREEING TO RESUME THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN WHICH WERE BROKEN OFF IN OCTOBER 1975. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WAS SOME DISAGREEMENT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD ANNOUNCE ITS DECISION TO RESUME TALKS AT THIS TIME DESPITE THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST. FRG FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IT WAS NOT FAIR TO IMPOSE DIFFERENT PRE-CONDITIONS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT THAN HAD BEEN IMPOSED WHEN FRANCO WAS IN POWER. UK FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, URGED THAT THE COMMUNITY WAIT UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING "MEANINGFUL STEPS" TOWARD PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY. AS A RESULT, THE MINISTERS CONFINED THEMSELVES TO ISSUING A STATEMENT NOTING THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SPAIN "NO LONGER PRECLUDED THE RESUMPTION OF CONTACTS REGARDING THE NEGOTIATIONS INTERRUPTED IN OCTOBER 1975."

3. THE MINISTERS COMPARED NOTES ON THE VISITS BY THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER TO BONN, PARIS AND LUXEMBOURG AND AGREED THAT MORE PRECISE INFORMATION AS TO SPANISH DESIRES WAS REQUIRED.

4. IN AN OFF-THE-RECORD BRIEFING FOR THE BRITISH PRESS, UK FOREIGN MINISTER CALLAGHAN NOTED THAT PRIME MINISTER NAVARRO WOULD BE SPEAKING IN THE CORTES ON JANUARY 28. HE SAID HE HOPED THAT AT THAT TIME THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD INDICATE ITS ATTITUDE TO RATIFYING TWO KEY INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONVENTIONS (NUMBER 87 AND 98) GOVERNING THE RIGHT OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. CALLAGHAN SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE SPANISH PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH WOULD INCLUDE PROPOSALS FOR REPEALING THE TERRORIST LAWS AND FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS COULD BE A CONSTRUCTIVE FACTOR IN ESTABLISHING A DEMOCRATIC SPAIN.

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PAGE 03 EC BRU 00608 211811Z

5. REGARDING POSSIBLE SPANISH ACCESSION TO THE COMMUNITY, CALLAGHAN SAID THAT SPAIN CANNOT CONSIDER NEGOTIATING MEMBERSHIP AT THE MOMENT AND WOULD HAVE TO BE "WELL DOWN THE ROAD" TOWARD PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY BEFORE ANY SUCH TALKS COULD REALLY GET GOING. SPEAKING WITH THE PRESS AFTER THE CALLAGHAN BRIEFING A UK SPOKESMAN WAS EVEN MORE FIRM IN SAYING THAT THE UK WOULD REQUIRE A LOT OF CONVINCING AND WOULD HAVE TO SEE "SUBSTANTIAL,

MEANINGFUL PROGRESS" BEFORE BEING WILLING TO TALK
MEMBERSHIP.

6. THE ENTIRE QUESTION IS TO BE DISCUSSED BY THE
FOREIGN MINISTERSIN THEI NEXT METING ON FEBRUARY 9
AND 10. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WILL AGAIN POSTPONE
ACTION TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE SPANISH FOREIGN
MINISTER'S VISIT TO BRUSSELS WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE
PLACE FEBRUARY 16-17.
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